

POCKET PC  
EXPERT

## FAQ

**Q** I've upgraded from an older Pocket PC to one of the latest Windows Mobile 5 handhelds, but I can't work out how to create ActiveSync backups of my data. What should I do?

**A** Quite a few changes have accompanied Windows Mobile 5 – some subtle, some not so subtle, and some downright inexplicable. The entire Pocket PC menu structure has changed significantly.

Pocket Excel (now Excel Mobile) files can no longer be password-protected, you can't add drawings to Word Mobile files as you did in Pocket Word, and ActiveSync won't back up the new devices. You can still synchronise selected data files, together with all your PIM data, but you cannot save your program files, system settings and so on.

The best way around this limitation is to use a program that backs up your memory contents to a storage card. Sprite Backup (\$30, around £15, from [www.spritesoftware.com](http://www.spritesoftware.com)) is the most flexible, as it can also copy completed backups to your PC for safekeeping.

### Steve Clack

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# Upgrading your handheld

You may not fancy upgrading your Pocket PC and having to get to grips with Windows Mobile 5 but, says **Steve Clack**, there are some very good reasons to take the plunge

**U**pgrading to a new handheld can be daunting. If your old handheld is more than a year or so old, it will also involve switching to Windows Mobile 5 (WM5), the newest Microsoft mobile operating system that powers all current Pocket PC devices. This has a number of benefits, such as improved security and some useful usability tweaks. However, there's still quite a lot to learn when making the switch from Pocket PC 2003 SE or any earlier version of the handheld OS.

### MOVING DATA

Getting all your old data across to a new handheld is largely handled by ActiveSync, and should be a painless process. All your PIM data will be transferred straight back from Microsoft Outlook to the new handheld. Your old documents can all be opened by any WM5 device, with most using exactly the same file formats as before. The exceptions are Pocket Word and Pocket Excel, as explained in the 'Standard life' box below. Before connecting your new PDA, you'll need to make sure you have the latest version of ActiveSync, as older versions won't connect to the newer handhelds.

### COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

Another thing you'll need to check, preferably before making your purchase, is that all the software you rely on is available in WM5-compatible versions. The process of converting software to work with the new operating system has proved a challenge for most developers, and a number of programs still haven't made it across. If you are buying a new handheld to replace a lost or broken one you'll have no choice, short of searching for a second-hand pre-WM5 model.

However, if you are making a voluntary upgrade just to get your hands on the latest technology, it's a good idea to do some research first. When you come to install all your software on the new handheld, be sure to download the correct WM5 versions from scratch. On no account try to load old pre-WM5 versions back on your new device via ActiveSync.

Once you have all your applications and data safely in place, you'll need to enter your old registration codes for the third-party software you've bought. Be sure to assign the same username and email address as before, otherwise the old codes won't work. A few software developers key their registration codes to a specific device. You may need to contact some developers for a new code, which they'll usually provide free of charge and without any hassle.

### MENU MASTERS

As you start to use your new handheld, you'll notice that the WM5 menu structure is radically different to the one with which you are familiar. It was designed to make things easier to use, though opinions vary on whether this was a success. Fortunately, most of the menu options you are used to are present and correct; they are just in different places. Some familiar old features have inexplicably disappeared (see the FAQ), but there are some handy new ones, too. If you can't find something you're looking for, try searching through the handheld's Help file for the program in question.

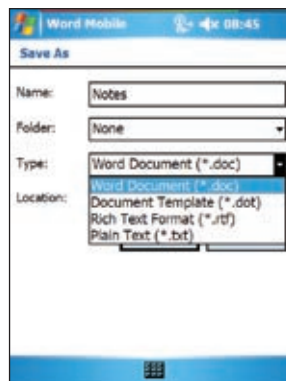
Finally, in the ever-evolving move towards miniaturisation, CF and SD storage cards are starting to give way to smaller miniSD and microSD cards. Be sure to add any replacement cards into the cost of your new handheld, or try to go for a model that still uses your old card format.

## Standard life Word and Excel file formats

Older versions of the Pocket PC operating system used Pocket Word and Pocket Excel as their native file formats, though they were also able to save into standard Word and Excel formats. The latest WM5 operating system has dispensed with these special file formats, and no longer gives you the option to save as .psw or .pxl formats. If you're using WM5, these file types won't show up in the file list view of new Word Mobile and Excel Mobile applications.

Once you have beamed or otherwise transferred a .psw or .pxl file to your Windows Mobile 5 device, go into File Explorer and double-tap on the file to open it. Go to File, Save As to save the file in one of the new formats. Remember not to save the new file

with the same name as the original. This is just good practice to avoid removing the wrong file when you come to delete the old one.



▲ Go to Save As and choose Type to select a text format

The advantage of switching to standard Word and Excel file formats is that you can safely send your files to PC users by email or other means and be sure they can read them. This wasn't the case with the old Pocket Word and Pocket Excel formats. On the downside, the files are larger.

The recently released Microsoft Office 2007 uses a completely different, XML-based file format that is currently not compatible with any handheld devices. Expect a Windows Mobile 5 update to support Office 2007 files around the middle of the year.



## PHATWARE PhatPad 4.0

★★★★★

\$40 (around £21)

The built-in Pocket PC Notes application is fine for a few quick scribbles, but there are much more powerful alternatives available. At the top of the heap is the latest version of PhatPad, which smoothes out your scribbles to make it feel like you're sketching on a sheet of paper.

As well as freehand drawing, it has an ingenious Shape Corrector mode, which turns hand-drawn shapes into perfect geometric circles, rectangles and so on. This makes it great for sketching rough schematics, maps and layout diagrams. Every

drawn object can be individually coloured, moved, scaled and tweaked. Your finished masterpieces can be saved into multi-page documents and exchanged with PhatPad's excellent desktop companion program.

PhatPad is excellent for managing lots of jottings, with a thumbnail view that shows a visual representation of each file. It also has good desktop import/export facilities and the ability to add voice notes and text memos to sketches. If you use CalliGrapher, the text-recognition software by the same author, PhatPad's Find

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Shape Corrector mode
- ✗ Expensive

SUPPLIER [www.phatware.com](http://www.phatware.com)

◀ Save your scribbles as multi-page documents with PhatPad

function will even locate text that has been entered as handwritten scribbles rather than typed text. This new version has a menu-based tool-selection process as an alternative to the usual icon-based system, but we still found the latter more intuitive.

Whether you're scribbling sketches for serious work or fun, PhatPad is ideal, and an extremely mature and stable product.

## RESCO.NET Resco Photo Viewer 6.0

★★★★★

\$25 (around £13)

Most Pocket PCs come with a basic photo-viewer application that's perfectly adequate for showing off a sequence of snapshots imported from your digital camera or the handheld's own built-in camera. Considering your PDA makes the perfect portable photo album, it makes sense to be able to perform basic photo editing on the handheld as well.

A Pocket PC is a better way to show photos than your desktop PC because it's convenient to pass around a group, and it's better than an iPod because the screen is bigger. If you have a model with a VGA-resolution (480x640) screen, image quality is second to none.

With Resco Photo Viewer, you can rotate and crop images, and tweak the brightness, contrast and gamma settings. If you're working with big images straight from a camera, Photo Viewer gives you complete control over the images so you can adjust them to suit the handheld screen.

It stops short of advanced image-editing facilities, but you get a basic set of drawing tools so you can scribble text, shapes and freehand drawings on to images. The new version still misses out on some of the handy image-tweaking features of its biggest competitor, Spb Imageer (\$15, around £8, from [www.spbsoftwarehouse.com](http://www.spbsoftwarehouse.com)), such as a red-eye remover

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✗ Lacks many editing features

SUPPLIER: [www.resco.net](http://www.resco.net)

◀ Resco Photo Viewer lets you tweak the brightness and contrast of images

for your flash photos, a blur/sharpen filter and colour-balance adjustments. Photo Viewer's sortable thumbnail and slideshow modes give you plenty of flexibility when presenting photos, though with lots of transition effects and the option to add individual audio clips or a rolling music soundtrack.

Photo Viewer is intuitive, supports most common image formats, and comes with a PC desktop companion application. But Spb Imageer has better editing features at a lower price.

## ANTON TOMOV Virtual Explorer 1.0

★★★★★

\$15 (around £8)



Serious Pocket PC users will want a more full-featured replacement for the built-in File Explorer, but until now there have been just two serious alternatives: Resco Explorer (\$25, around £13, from [www.resco.net](http://www.resco.net)) or the freeware Total Commander ([www.ghisler.com/ce.htm](http://www.ghisler.com/ce.htm)).

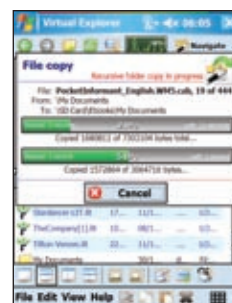
Virtual Explorer is a brand-new alternative that costs less than Resco Explorer but has most of its advanced features. In this first version, there's no Zip compression, though it's promised for a forthcoming release. However, it comes

with a highly configurable multi-windowed file manager that lets you manage files and folders with ease. There's a file-encryption facility to scramble and password-protect individual files, but not entire folders. There's also a shred option that deletes files so they cannot be restored, even with file-recovery software.

The interface is delightfully polished, and a tap-and-hold on any file or folder brings up a list of actions, including a comprehensive Properties screen that shows statistics and file information. When performing file-copying

### SUMMARY

- ✓ Inexpensive; good range of features
- ✗ No Zip compression

SUPPLIER [www.antontomov.com](http://www.antontomov.com)

◀ Take a trip around your Pocket PC using Virtual Explorer

operations, Virtual Explorer shows a helpful status screen that displays the size of files to be copied and the estimated copy time remaining. There's no quick 'Copy to' option that lets you specify the target location without performing separate copy-and-paste operations.

Overall, there's some room for improvement, but this version is remarkably good, and some users are sure to prefer it to the alternatives. **CS**